"When a person becomes too ill or infirm to follow the fortunes of the band, he is abandoned to shift for himself. Since this was the fate of a sick Indian whom I knew, the details of her case will best serve to illustrate the treatment accorded the aged in Siriono society. The case in question occurred while I was wandering with the Indians near Yaguarú, Guarayos. The band decided to make a move in the direction of the Rio Blanco. While they were making preparations for the journey, my attention was called to a middle-aged woman who was lying sick in her hammock, too sick to speak. I inquired of the chief what they planned to do with her. He referred me to her husband who told me that she would be left to die because she was too ill to walk and because she was going to die anyway. Departure was scheduled for the following morning. I was on hand to observe the event. The entire band walked out of the camp without so much as a farewell to the dying woman. Even her husband departed without saying good-by. She was left with a fire, a calabash of water, her personal belongings, and nothing more. She was too sick to protest.

After the band had left, I set out in company with a number of Indians for the Mission of Yaguarú to cure myself of an eye ailment. On my return about 3 weeks later, I passed by the same spot again. I went into the house, but found no sign of the woman there. I continued my journey down the trail in the direction of Tibaera and soon came upon a hut in which the band had camped the day I parted from them. Just outside of this shelter were the remains (and hammock) of the sick woman. By this time, of

course, the ants and vultures had stripped the bones clean. She had tried her utmost to follow the fortunes of the band, but had failed and had experienced the same fate that is accorded all Siriono whose days of utility are over."

1: Holmberg--87 [5] (1941-42) 1950 Siriono
116, 152, 761

"For a Siriono, death is the culmination of an often short and always bitter struggle for survival. Having wrestled valiantly to live, he wrestles equally valiantly not to die. But the odds are all against him. His environment and culture are harsh. Having no medicine to prolong his life, he is often consigned to an early grave; having no religion to calm his soul, he frequently dies with fear and bitterness in his heart."